

We stalked each other with squirt guns,  
screaming and laughing and staggering.  
We played with the overhead crane,  
hoisting each other's tool boxes to the ceiling.  
We unscrewed knobs off of machine handles  
and threw them around like baseballs.  
Our foreman sneaked drinks  
from the bottle of vodka in his toolbox  
and paced about the shop in a daze.  
We respected our foreman.  
He'd given us some valuable advice.  
"Whatever you do," he'd warned us over and over, "don't  
join the Air Force and fly a K-20. It's gonna CRASH."

#### A THREAT

My fellow workers and I  
operate machines that cut steel blocks.

As the machines cut the steel,  
my fellow workers like to stare and laugh at each other.  
They are ready to piss on each other's graves.

They fear me.  
They call me crazy.  
They don't like the poetry I read.  
They don't like the paintings I have hung  
on the board behind my machine.  
They look at me  
like they want to cut my balls off.

Tomorrow I think I will start bringing roses to work.  
Each day I will stand a rose in a jar of water  
on the workbench behind my machine.  
I want to really terrify my fellow workers  
this time.

#### AT GOODSTONE AIRCRAFT COMPANY

The blacks and the bikers  
operated machines next to each other.

The bikers yelled nigger jokes to each other  
and plastered their rollaway toolboxes  
with Confederate flag stickers.

The blacks had anxiety attacks  
and read Bibles  
and found the hangman's nooses that the bikers hung  
from the beams above the blacks' machines.



But the blacks and the bikers rose above this and united  
in their dedication to making the K-20 bombers  
that would carry atomic bombs  
and thus ensure peace for all.

## REVENGE

Matt did everything he thought a biker should do.  
He rode a Harley Davidson motorcycle.  
He never wore a helmet  
and often dumped his motorcycle at high speeds.  
He got into fistfights and carried a knife.  
He asked his women for blow jobs all the time.  
When he played pool in a bar,  
he'd break a pool cue  
and walk around with a piece of it  
pinned above his ear like a huge pencil.

Real bikers beat Matt up a lot.  
They called him a "Want-to-be-a-biker"  
and laughed at him,  
or threatened to have a "party" with him.

So Matt gave up trying to be a biker,  
and became a policeman.

## THE LIFERS

The new steelworkers  
sucked the smoking oil and the steel dust  
deep into their lungs  
and laughed.  
They laughed  
as the screaming of the automatic drill presses  
pulverized their nerves  
and shot into their hearts.

The veteran steelworkers  
wore 30-year Company Service pins  
and died  
of strokes and heart attacks and lung cancer.

The veterans laughed at the new steelworkers  
who were so sure they would never  
let themselves become veterans.